**A second language environment**

TESOL Class # 137th WD

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Millions of Korean learn English as a second language because English is an essential in these days. I am also one of them. We had to start learning English when we are very young age, whether we want to or not. However, a lot of Korean can’t speak English. Why?

The first reason is we only focus on only reading and listening, which are receptive skills. English is a required subject in Korea. Many Koreans spend a lot of time to study English. They know lots of grammar rules and vocabularies, but they are not able to speak. The reason is that they study English is to get a good job or a good grade in an exam. To get a good score, we have to memorize grammar formula and vocabulary before understanding.

In Korea, we have a college entrance exam like SAT. There are two parts in the exam – listening and reading. We have to get a good score at the exam to go to university. When I was in high school, I had to go to the private English institution. The only thing I did there was studying previous exam questions repeatedly. I had no idea of using vocabularies and how to use grammar in speaking. We need to practice in a number of areas not only reading and listening but also speaking and writing. The important thing in learning English is a balance among different language skills.

Secondly, a teacher in Korea spends most of class time to explain something using the blackboard. A teacher is the most active person in the classroom that is traditional teaching. The only thing a student can do is listening and taking a note. Jim Scrivener claims, “Whereas most teachers will need to be good ‘explainers’ at various points in their lessons, a teaching approach based solely or mainly on this technique can be problematic.” I totally agree with this opinion. It is important to explain to student, but rapport between teachers and students is more important.

I had a chance to go study abroad when I was sophomore in a university. I transfer to School of Visual Arts and took some classes. There were a lot of presentation classes and professor used to ask my opinion. By that time, It was hard to express my opinion especially in English, because I was passive in the class time in Korea. One day, I had to have a presentation in an advertising class. I was nervous and I went to professor to say “ I am not good at English, I am not sure I can make a good presentation” and he said “ You are good enough even though English is not your first language. I can’t speak Korean a little bit.” After that day, I started to participate a class and think actively.

Eventually, It is most important to have confidence to learn other language. I want to be a teacher who teaches a useful skill such as speaking. When my students meet foreigner in a street, I want they do not feel fear. I also want to have a good rapport with my students.

Reference

* Jim Scrivener (2010). Learning Teaching - The Essential Guide to English Language Teaching (3rd edition) . MACMILLAN BOOKS FOR TEACHERS